

FORM B – BUILDING

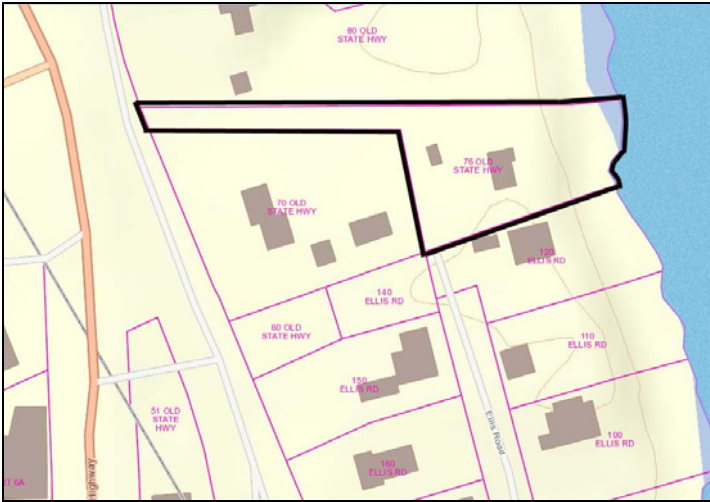
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from southwest.

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: April 2013

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

22-10

ORLEANS

EAS.616

Town/City: Eastham

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): South Eastham

Address: 76 Old State Highway

Historic Name: Roscoe & Emma Walton House

Uses: Present: part of Captain Heman Smith House compound (hotel and guest cottages)

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1939

Source: tax records, deeds, censuses

Style/Form: Vernacular Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: undetermined

Exterior Material:

Foundation: undetermined

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*): none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.07 ac.

Setting: The subject property has water frontage on Town Cove and is comprised of a flag lot created from the Heman Smith property at 70 Old State Highway. Single family residential uses surround the property.

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EASTHAM

76 OLD STATE HIGHWAY

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This simple one-story, wood frame dwelling has a gable roof and is clad with the wood shingles ubiquitous on Cape Cod. A bulkhead on the right side provides access to the cellar. The four-bay front facade has a corner window to the left of the front door, a pair of double-hung sash to the right of the entrance, and a single window farther to the right (south). The windows are 4-over-1 double hung sash with vertical muntins in the Craftsman style. An oriel or "bump-out" window has been added to the right (south) side of the house and a shed-roofed sunporch off the right rear corner. In addition, a large wood deck extends from the left rear corner on the water (east) side. The dates of these changes are unknown; building permits for this work are not available. A large paved parking area terminates a long driveway over the narrow portion of the flag lot that extends from Old State Highway.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 76 Old State Highway, now called "Cove House" and part of the guest properties that make up the Captain Heman Smith compound, is listed by the Town Assessor as built in 1924. Deeds indicate that the house and its lot were conveyed as part of the Captain Heman Smith house property at 70 Old State Highway until 1938, and tax and census records for the owners of that property are shown as owning only one dwelling until roughly 1940. Thus the house at 76 Old State Highway was probably built about that time.

The house sits on a portion of a 1.5-acre lot that Brewster developer Gilbert Everett Ellis sold to Roscoe S. and Emma G. Walton in January 1926.¹ Ellis was a farmer, realtor, and owner of a shore net and pound fishery. He was born in Brewster in 1867; his father, Thaddeus, was a fisherman, and his mother, Caroline J. Norway, was born in Spain. Ellis began his career as a store clerk when he was fourteen, if not younger, and at the time of his marriage in 1887 he worked as a salesman. The 1900 census lists Ellis as a fisherman; the 1910 census lists him more specifically as a weir fisherman. He was among a declining number of Cape fishermen in what was termed the "shore net and pound fishery," which used large nets attached to a wood framework extending from the shore outward to catch such inshore schooling fish as herring and menhaden. These were sold as bait to the offshore fishing industry, and other species caught in the nets were sold to urban fresh-fish markets after rail lines reached the Cape in the 1870s. In 1914 the Town of Brewster granted Ellis a permit to build six fish pounds in its coastal waters and by 1920 Ellis was one of three Brewster men who ran a pound fishery; he employed seven men, among the most of any of the 43 pound fisheries in the state, and caught \$3100 of fish that year.²

Once a prosperous industry on Cape Cod, the pound fishery began to decline after World War I, and by 1920 Ellis was probably preparing to leave the industry. The 1920 census shows him as a farmer, and by 1929 he is listed as a realtor. In September 1924 he bought four acres in South Eastham bordered mostly by the state highway, Town Cove, and what was, for a brief time, a canal that connected Town Cove to the river at Boat Meadow on Cape Cod Bay, a distance of less than a mile.³ Ellis acquired the tract from New York City insurance broker Frederick Dorflinger Suydam, whose father, William Farrington Suydam, was an affluent Pennsylvania silk manufacturer and a summer resident of Orleans. The tract was part of the far larger holdings of Captain Heman Smith and his wife Louisiana Crosby Smith, who lived at 70 Old State Highway (EAS.43). In 1881, five years after the Smiths were lost at sea in the wreck of the bark *Burnside*, their children sold the property to their sibling Francis M. Smith (1852-1922), who in 1886 began renting rooms in the 70 Old State Highway house to summer visitors. In 1898 Francis Smith sold the property to Somerville carpenter George S. Newcomb, an Orleans native, who also used the Heman Smith House to board summer visitors. In 1913 Newcomb's son, George E. Newcomb, sold the four-acre tract to Albert F. Sherman, superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor, and in 1916 Sherman and his wife sold it to Frederick Suydam's mother, Mary Elizabeth Dorflinger Suydam, and Frederick Suydam sold it in 1924 to Ellis.⁴

In April 1925 Ellis platted a twenty-seven lot subdivision on roughly 3.3 acres south of the Heman Smith house (the Ellis Road and 30 Old State Highway properties were built on these lots), and in January 1926, he sold the 1.5-acre tract now occupied by 70 and 76 Old State Highway to Roscoe S. Walton, a Maine-born pharmacist turned innkeeper. April 1926 town assessor's records show Ellis with 2.5 acres and no buildings and Walton with a house valued at \$2500 on 1.5 acres, a barn, a poultry

¹ Gilbert E. Ellis, Brewster, to Roscoe S. and Emma G. Walton, Brighton, 14 January 1926, BCD 430:131.

² On the pound fishery, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2010), especially 11-12, 33, 91, 96, 138-39, 164, 172; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners For the Year 1914* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1915), 100; and "Returns from the Shore Net and Pound Fisheries for the Year 1920," *Annual Report of the Division of Fisheries and Game for the Year Ending November 30, 1920* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1921), 151-58.

³ Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*, 4th ed. (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 35-36, states that the canal was dug in 1804 through "land following very nearly the boundary line between the towns of Eastham and Orleans" and became known as "Jeremiah's Cutter" where it crossed the property of Jeremiah Smith. A shallow channel, the canal filled quickly, and in 1817 the Eastham and Orleans Canal Proprietors built a wider one, but it was abandoned at some unstated later date.

⁴ William H. Smith, Boston; Mary M. Smith and Nellie J. Smith, all formerly of Eastham, to Francis M. Smith, 1 November 1881, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (BCD) 148:366; Francis M. Smith, Somerville, to George S. Newcomb, 5 November 1898, BCD 296:12; George S. Newcomb to George E. Newcomb, 28 May 1909, BCD 296:105; George E. Newcomb to Albert F. Sherman, Boston, 6 January 1913, BCD 321:21; Albert F. and Emma L. Sherman to Mary E. Suydam, Montclair NJ, 15 August 1916, BCD 345:440; Frederick D. Suydam, NYC, to Gilbert E. Ellis, East Brewster, 4 September 1924, BCD 409:454.

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house, and an acre of land elsewhere in Eastham. Tax records indicate that only the house at 70 Old State Highway was on this lot in 1926.

Born in Belfast, Maine, about 1857, Roscoe S. Walton was working as a clerk in Boston by the early 1880s. In 1892, when he married the young widow Mary Emma Thompson Dorr of Stoneham, he was working as a druggist, and the 1895 directory for Wakefield shows the couple in that town. Walton's pharmacy was in the Wakefield post office building. By 1899 he had become partners with A. M. Holyoke (probably his married sister) in an apothecary business in Lynn, and over the next two decades he, sometimes singly and sometimes with his wife, lived in Stoughton, Roxbury, and Brookline. The 1920 census shows him, for some reason, as a single man living in the household of his sister, Addie M. Holyoke.

Roscoe and Emma Walton probably opened the Captain Heman Smith House as the Walton Inn shortly after acquiring the property from Gilbert Ellis. The 1929 Cape Cod directory lists that inn as one of three hotels in Eastham, all on King's Highway; the other two were the Overlook Inn and Lyndhurst Village. The 1930 census shows Roscoe Walton as a seventy-year-old innkeeper who had the income of one boarder as well as overnight guests. Tax records for 1931 show him as paying a poll tax only in Eastham; his wife is shown as owner of the house, the barn and shed, the poultry house, a roadside stand, the 1.5-acre homestead lot, and another acre. Emma Walton died on Dec. 27, 1932.⁵

The subject property was sold in May 1933 to Alice Parker Hutchins of Brooklyn, New York, who on the same day deeded it to Evelyn Southwick of Framingham with the provision that she provide a home for Roscoe Walton in the house for the rest of his life and that she feed and care for him as long as he was able to live in the house. Roscoe Walton died on September 17, 1933.⁶ In December 1934 the Seamen's Savings Bank of Provincetown foreclosed on the property and nearly two years later the bank sold it to Nettie H. Wiley and Sophia W. Adamson, both of West Somerville.

Nettie Higgins Wiley was the wife of Alvin Lewis Wiley, a Wellfleet native who had moved with his family to Cambridge between 1910 and 1920. He had been town clerk and treasurer in Wellfleet when the couple's daughter Sophia Althea Wiley was born and was later a coal and grocery merchant there; in Cambridge in 1920 he was a grocery salesman and lived with his wife Nettie, daughter Sophia, then nineteen years old and working as a dry good store clerk, and his widowed mother-in-law Elizabeth W. Higgins. In the 1930s the family lived in Somerville, and Alvin Wiley was a cigar and tobacco merchant in Boston.⁷

Between 1935 and 1938 Sophia A. Wiley married James K. Adamson, a native of England who had been living in Montreal in 1935. By 1938 the couple was living in Boston where Adamson worked as a radio operator. In September of that same year Nettie Wiley and her daughter Sophia sold the parcel on which 76 Old State Highway now stands to Sophia's husband James, along with a ten-foot-wide right-of-way to access Old State Highway over the land Wiley and her daughter jointly owned.⁸ In 1940 the Adamsons were living on Old State Highway and Adamson was working as a painting and gardening handyman. Alvin and Netti Wiley were listed in the census immediately preceding the Adamsons, and the census taker noted in the margin that the ownership of the Wiley's house was "shared with daughter." Tax records for 1947 show Adamson with a .12-acre lot and a cottage valued at \$1200. Judging by the value of the dwelling, it seems likely that James and Sophia Adamson were living at 76 Old State Highway, which the Wileys might have built for them. The Wileys probably lived in the Heman Smith house at 70 Old State Highway.

In March 1951 Maurice W. Wiley, Sophia Wiley Adamson's brother, deeded his interest in the properties at 70 and 76 Old State Highway to his sister and brother-in-law. Though no record of their deaths has yet been found, the title transfer suggests that Alvin L. Wiley had died by then; Nettie Higgins Wiley died in 1953.⁹ Tax records for 1954 show James K. Adamson with the .12-acre lot and a house valued at \$1500; his wife is shown with the 1.5-acre "homestead lot"—the 70 Old State Highway house valued at \$3000, a barn, and a "camp house" valued at \$200.

In 1958 the Adamsons sold the Old State Highway properties to Walter and Doris D. Wade of Truro, and Wade subdivided the properties. By 2002 Harry E. Hunt III of Orleans had acquired both 70 and 76 Old State Highway, and in 2007 he sold both properties to current owner Michael J. McNamara, who owns 70 Old State Highway jointly with Mark J. Powers.¹⁰

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⁵ Reports of the Town of Eastham, 1933. Emma's cause of death was numerous ailments.

⁶ Ibid. Roscoe's cause of death was self-inflicted wound.

⁷ Roscoe S. and Emma G. Walton to Alice Parker Hutchins, Brooklyn NY, 3 May 1933, BCD 494:236; Hutchins to Evelyn Southwick, Framingham, 3 Nat 1933, BCD 494:326; Seamen's Savings Bank of Provincetown, holder of mortgage from Roscoe S. and Emma C. Walton (1 April 1930, BCD 472:528) to Seamen's Savings Bank, 18 December 1934, BCD 508:331; Seamen's Savings Bank of Provincetown to Nettie H. Wiley and Sophia W. Adamson, both West Somerville, 3 August 1936, BCD 521:27.

⁸ Nettie H. Wiley and Sophia W. Adamson to James K. B. Adamson, 15 September 1938, BCD 544:138.

⁹ Maurice W. Wiley to James K. B. and Sophia W. Adamson, 22 March 1951, BCD 779:70.

¹⁰ Maurice W. Wiley to James K. B. and Sophia W. Adamson, 22 March 1951, BCD 779:70; Harry E. Hunt III, Orleans, to Michael J. McNamara, Milford CT, 14 February 2007, BCD 21845:99.

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MAPS

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Plan of subdivision dated Sept. 28, 2007; the subject property is Parcel 010.